



U.S. Trade and Development Agency

Making Connections in the Middle East and North Africa *A U.S. and MENA Regional Dialogue for Information and Communications Technology Regulatory Change and Market Growth*

May 14-17, 2006 ? Shangri-La's Barr Al Jissah Hotel ? Muscat, Oman

Fact Sheet

BACKGROUND:

The U.S. Trade and Development Agency (USTDA), with the support of several U.S. government agencies, will sponsor a conference to highlight issues and opportunities in the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sector in the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA). Project delegates are expected from the following countries: **Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Tunisia, West Bank/Gaza, and Yemen**. Delegates from **Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait and UAE** will also attend.

Significant opportunities for U.S. information and communications equipment vendors and service operators exist in MENA despite differing levels of development throughout the region. In many MENA economies, access to affordable telecommunication services, particularly in rural and remote areas, remains a challenge. However, advances in information and communications technology plus greater infrastructure affordability have paved the way for strong growth in these sectors in the region, particularly in wireless solutions. New technologies in this sector have expanded telephony in many developing countries, providing customers access to a wireless data services platform and advancing mobile e-commerce.

With this in mind, the conference has two main objectives:

- 1) Promote specific short- and medium-term commercial opportunities for U.S. businesses in the MENA information and communications sector market, based on U.S. competitiveness and developmental priorities in the respective countries.
- 2) Highlight and promote dialogue on key issues including: Regulatory Landscape, Emerging Applications and Services, Universal Service, Privatization, Standards and Spectrum Management.

The agenda is being designed with these objectives and themes in mind. It will include delegate presentations on opportunities in Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Tunisia, West Bank/Gaza, and Yemen. There will also be an emphasis on sector development and policy issues in Yemen and Iraq. Delegates will participate in roundtable discussions focused on ICT policy initiatives. In addition, prescheduled one-on-one meetings will be arranged between U.S. companies, delegates, and U.S. government officials.

OPPORTUNITIES:

More than 30 trade and investment opportunities will be presented. Profiles will highlight major public infrastructure expansion plans as well as medium-sized export and investment opportunities in the participating MENA countries. The descriptions will describe opportunities in fixed line infrastructure, mobile systems, wireless local loop,

satellite services, data networking and Internet access. Project size will range from \$2 million to \$200 million USD with expected completion in the next three years. Computer Frontiers, in cooperation with World Information Technology and Services Alliance (WITSA), is managing project research, delegate selection and development of the Conference Resource Guide.

CONFERENCE DATES & VENUE:

The conference will take place May 14-17, 2006 at Shangri-La's Barr Al Jissah Hotel in Muscat, Oman.

ANTICIPATED ATTENDANCE:

The conference will bring together more than 40 public and private sector project delegates, information and communications sector government leaders, key decision makers from the national, state, and municipal level from the participating MENA countries. Also participating will be representatives from U.S. equipment suppliers and service providers catering to this industry.

In addition, representatives of several U.S. Government Departments and Agencies, including USTDA, the Federal Communications Commission, Department of Commerce, Department of State, National Telecommunications and Information Administration, the U.S. Export-Import Bank, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, as well as U.S. and multilateral financial institutions and leading industry organizations will attend. Total attendance is expected to exceed 175 participants.

SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS:

U.S. and MENA industry organizations will be contacted to lend their support to this initiative for the benefit of their members.

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES:

This conference provides a unique opportunity for U.S. companies to showcase their products and/or services to potential customers in the MENA region. Sponsorship benefits include a tabletop display in the exhibit area, complimentary registration, on-site signage, pre-conference marketing recognition, and a corporate profile in the conference materials. U.S. companies should contact Pam Peseux, MFM, for more information and the sponsorship prospectus.

OFFICIAL CONFERENCE WEB SITE:

The conference web site is: www.trademeetings.com.

ABOUT USTDA:

The U.S. Trade and Development Agency advances economic development and U.S. commercial interests in developing and middle-income countries. The agency funds various forms of technical assistance, feasibility studies, training, orientation visits and business workshops that support the development of a modern infrastructure and a fair and open trading environment. USTDA's strategic use of foreign assistance funds to support sound investment policy and decision-making in host countries creates an enabling environment for trade, investment and sustainable economic development. In carrying out its mission, USTDA gives emphasis to economic sectors that may benefit from U.S. exports of goods and services.

REGISTRATION:

The registration fee is US\$550 for all U.S. companies and financial institutions and US\$250 for all other companies and financial institutions from the participating project countries. The fee includes a copy of the **Conference Resource Guide and CD, Conference Handbook, participant list, and all meals and receptions**, as noted in the conference program. **One-on-One meetings** will be pre-scheduled for U.S. companies with project delegates and U.S. Government officials.

CONFERENCE CONTACTS:

MFM Group, Inc. is organizing and marketing the conference on behalf of USTDA. Computer Frontiers, in partnership with World Information Technology and Services Alliance (WITSA), is conducting project research and preparing the technical content and resource guide for the conference.

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